



Durbin questions Trump administration on efforts to stop future election interference

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WASHINGTON - At a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today pressed members of the Trump Administration on their efforts to thwart future election interference by the Russians or any adversary of the United States. In 2016, Russia successfully hacked into the Illinois State Board of Elections' voter registration system and targeted at least 20 other states with similar attacks.

"We do know that Special Counsel Mueller has aggressively gone after Russian interference. He has indicted 13 Russian nationals and three Russian corporations, in addition to seven others, that might have been complicit in this effort," Durbin said. "But when we look at the money given to States - \$380 million for the United States of America, I think Illinois shares something like \$13 million and we were hacked by the Russians - I wonder if we can really point to a record where we have aggressively gone after Russian interference, set up defenses and deterrence so that they will not do this again in November."

Durbin continued, "I just don't think we have shown an intensity of focus and purpose to let the Russians or any other country know that we are serious enough when it comes to this next election, and we are only a few weeks away."

The FY18 omnibus spending bill provided \$380 million to the Election Assistance Commission (EAC), which is responsible for distributing the money to state election authorities. The bill required states to use the money to improve the administration of Federal elections, including to enhance election technology and make election security improvements.

At today's hearing, Durbin also discussed his bipartisan bill with Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC), the bipartisan [*Defending Elections against Trolls from Enemy Regimes*](#)

(DETER) Act. This bill will prevent foreign regimes from exploiting our immigration laws to advance their efforts to undermine our democracy by making “improper interference in U.S. elections” a ground of inadmissibility under U.S. immigration law. Violators would be barred from obtaining a visa to enter the United States.

The *DETER Act* is in response to threats like those revealed by the Special Counsel’s indictment of Russians who traveled to the United States with the explicit purpose to learn more about American political and electoral processes and how they could interfere with such processes. The indictment describes how two of the thirteen individuals gathered intelligence during a three-week trip in June 2014.

According to the indictment, the individuals “falsely claimed they were traveling for personal reasons.” While in the United States, the individuals traveled to Nevada, California, New Mexico, Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, Louisiana, Texas, and New York “for the purpose of collecting intelligence to inform the operations.” A third individual attempted to travel to the United States, but did not receive a visa, and an additional co-conspirator, who is not listed in the indictment, traveled to Atlanta in November 2014.

At today’s Judiciary Committee hearing, Durbin questioned Adam Hickey, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice (DOJ) National Security Division; and Matthew Masterson, Cybersecurity Advisor, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) National Protection and Programs Directorate.